

# Self-Schema, Self-Concept, and Principal Role of Conflict Management Styles at Workplace

Aida Mehrad

Department of Social and Development Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology, University Putra Malaysia (UPM)

## Abstract

The purpose of current literature review is to classify the crucial role of styles of conflict management at workplace, and their effects on self-schema and self-concept of employees. The outcomes of this study establish the conflict management styles that have fundamental contribution on employees' self-schema and self-concept at workplace. As well, the present investigation concentrated on styles of conflict management as main organizational factors; and their effect on behavior, attitude, performance, and reaction of employees. Moreover, lack of attention to these styles lead to reductions of employees' engagement, performance, and presentation at work environment. Therefore, this research supports employees' attitude and behavior regarding styles of conflict management; and their relation with self-schema and self-concept.

**Keywords:** conflict management styles, employees, self-concept, self-schema, workplace

## 1. Introduction

Study human life assumed as one the main factor that conducts employees in their personal and social lifecycle. In reality, employees perhaps faced with some difficulties in their family life or social life; moreover, realizing their behavior and personality play critical role at environment specifically at workplace (Huselid, 1995; Sohail & Delin, 2013). In actual fact, presence of accurate strategies can be helpful to decreasing and controlling environmental problems and improving organizational behaviors amongst employees (Ahsan, Abdullah, Gun Fie, & Alam, 2009); on the other hand, it can be useful to increasing or growing abilities, performance, appropriate behavior, and reaction toward other individuals at workplace (Deh Bozorgi & Hadaegh, 2006). One of the influential organizational factors that play imperative role at workplace and effect on employees' attitude and performance is conflict management styles (Slabbert, 2004; Copley, 2008). But before to recognizing the importance of conflict management styles, should be knowing conflict and conflict management. Indeed, the conflict arises from organizational issues that are connected to structure process or employees. By way of explanation, the conflict determined as an underlying human phenomenon which appeared at workplace (Ng, Pena-Mora, & Tamaki, 2007).

How and when can decrease or control this issue at work? As it happens, presence of accurate management and applying it in the correct way can be improvement suggestion, but this management should be following various types or styles and appears based on specific situation at work environment (Zartman, 2000). In consequence, the conflict should be managing; similarly, management referred to performance of receiving individuals together to complete desired goals and purposes using available resources professionally and effectively (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001). Then, management should be pursuing diverse styles. Each of these styles have considerable consequence on behavior, attitude, performance, reaction, concept, and schema of employees at workplace (De Dreu, Van Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004).

There are different views about occurring conflict and its management at workplace. Regarding view's Thomas (1976), conflict management involved in five styles that related to the present research. These styles involved collaboration, accommodation, competition, avoidance, and compromising (Rahim, 2002; Kinnander, 2011). In the present literature review focused on role of conflict management styles on employees' concept and schema at workplace. In the following will be explained these styles role and their relation with employees' attitude and behavior.

## 2. Conflict Management Styles

Conflict management is the repetition of classifying and handling conflict in a practical, reasonable, and well-organized manner. In reality, the conflict management needs some skills such as effective interactive, problem solving, and negotiating with a focus on interests that lack of attention to it leads to unsatisfactory behavioral reactions at workplace (Cropanzano et al., 2001). The conflict management limits negative aspects of difficulties and increases positive aspects where the conflict is taking place. Moreover, goal of conflict management is to improve efficiency or performance in organizational situation (Farhangi, 2008). According to the important role of conflict management distinguishing its styles and knowing the role of each style is super essential (Behfar, Peterson, Mannis, & Trochim, 2008); in this regard, their definition and improving knowledge about them should be determined as first step (Burton & Dukes, 1990; Rahim, 2002).

Competing style referred to using formal authority or other power to satisfy your concerns without regard to others concerns of conflict with. In addition, accommodation style determined as allowing the other party to

satisfy their concerns while ignoring your own. Avoidance style likewise referred to not paying attention to the conflict and not taking any performance to resolve it (Tong & Chen, 2008). Also, in compromising style attempting to resolve a conflict by recognizing a solution that is partially satisfactory to both parties, but completely satisfactory to neither. And, collaboration style is cooperating with the other party to distinguish their concerns and stating your own concerns in an effort to discovery a mutually and completely satisfactory solution way (Aldag & Kuzuhara, 2002; Copley, 2008).

There are different types of theories which considered on conflict management. One of these theory is the theory of Marx that related to present study and somehow derived from Thomas-Kilman Model (1974) (Figure 1 illustrated this model). The Theory of Marx explained about conflict as granted; and focused on behaviors that is related to this factor. In truth, the theory discussed about conflict that occurred between manager and employee (Jost & Weitzel 2007).

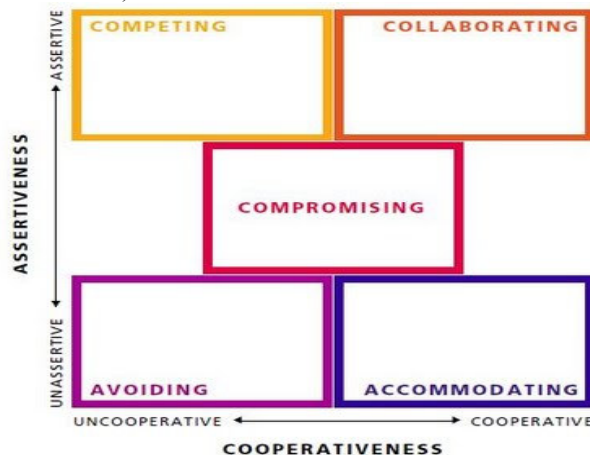


Figure 1: Thomas-Kilman Model (1974)

### Employees' self-schema

Self-schema refers to individuals believes and ideas about themselves. These believes are applied to guide and organize information processing, especially when the information is significant to the self (Kassin, Fein, & Markus, 2008). In point of fact, the self-schemas are stable and enduring memory structures about the self that integrate and summarized an individual's thought, feeling, and experiences about the self in a specific behavioral domain (Stein, 1996). Additionally, this factor states to how individual knew his/herself and clarified his/her physical features and likewise personality trait in social order (Wilderdom, 2003). There are various types of self-schemas and believes that appearing based on numerous factors such as conflicts at workplace (Valentino, Cicchetti, Rogosch, & Sheree, 2008). In point of fact, these schemas impacted via conflict or conflicts that presence at work and accounted as unsafe organizational factor. As well, the self-schema formed based on different factors that individuals specifically employees faced with at their workplace; similarly, the schema is a kind of believe or attitude that derived from self (Markus, 1977).

### 3. Employee' Self-Concept

There are a variety of ways to think about the self. The most widely used term is self-concept and generally refers to the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned opinions, attitudes, and feelings that each individual holds to be true about his or her personal existence (Weiten, Dunn, & Hammer, 2014). Certainly of the self-concept in maintaining physical and psychosocial well-being has been broadly recognized by different individuals (Stein, 1995). The self-concept also assumed as a multi-dimensional construct that states to an individual's perception of self in relative to any number of characteristics, such as academics, gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others (Bong & Clark, 1999).

Overall, the self-concept assumed as a multidimensional construct that having one general facet and numerous specific facet (Tan & Yates, 2007). A positive self-concept can be developed through perform objectively in knowing oneself, always appreciate oneself, be friend to oneself and always have a positive and rational thinking. Absolutely, this positive concept appears based on various internal and external factors in personal and social life of individuals; likewise, it will be growth in the positive manner. Clearly, it is super necessary recognizing self and effective factors that associated to self-concept (Yahaya, 2009).

### 4. Conflict Management Styles, Self-Schema, and Self-Concept

Based on role of conflict management styles at workplace, and their impacts on employees' attitude and behavior, can explain that applying accurate style leads to satisfaction and high level of employees' performance and

presentation at work environment (Gray & Starke, 1984). In actual fact, the existence of appropriate style at workplace can be helpful on employees' attitude and idea toward their work and activity; consequently, it can have positive influence on their concept and conduct schemas of employees, noticeably (Leung, Anita, Liu, & Thomas, 2005).

## 5. Conclusion

The impact and consequences of unattended conflict at workplace would argue for immediate attention to the resolution of the conflict rather than a careful and systematic approach to investigating the underlying causes of conflict (Tonder, Havenga, & Visagie, 2008). Besides, management has ancient past, and it should start from family and then arrive to society and then workplace. But in some cases this management confronts with conflict and appears some difficulties. In other words, conflict management as social situation amongst individuals disagree with fundamental issue related to the organization or show hostility to each other (Graham, 2009); and it could trace on attitudes and behaviors of human in his/her existence (Rahim, 2002). Conversely, management as a social behavior has direct effect on performance and behavior of managers and their colleagues in a team or group. Awareness and using correct management styles have confident effects on human activities and could improve products at workplace. According to the component of conflict management and using correct styles, and its effects on performance and behavior of employees, the value of these styles assumed more (Gray & Starke, 1984). In contrast, majority of managers do not have enough knowledge about difficulties that occurred at workplace; truly, they don't distinguish exactly which organizational factor leads to problem and appearing conflict at work environment. Conflict could be result of an affective and subjective state or a cognitive or subjective state. Also, it could be related to behaviors, past experiences, and goals. In most of conditions knowing the correct style of management is super vital and it can be helpful for work situation (Hou Molina, Sawahata, & Deang, 2005). Because it can effect on behaviors and attitudes of employees toward their work and increases level of work outcomes. This issue completely related to knowing behavior and personality of employees that should be support from managers, organizations, workplaces, and also the employees who are working at that place (Barkhuizen, Swanepoel, & Ermakova, 2012). Because behaviors, opinions, and personalities of every individual provide a cognitive schema that considering the whole life. Even though, these behaviors and schemas linked to style of management and create an organizational cycle with positive or negative directions (Rahim, 2002).

With distinguishing styles of conflict management and their usage at workplace, should be determined that which style of management can be useful at specific situation and conduct employees' attitude in the positive way; additionally, provides appropriate schema and concept amongst employees that derived from self or themselves. All of these factors should be support via family, workplace education, work ministry, and any other part of society that related to work and employees' well-being.

## References

- Ahsan, N., Abdullah, Z., Gun Fie, Y. D., & Alam, S. (2009). A study of job stress on job satisfaction among university staff in Malaysia: Empirical study. *European Journal of Social Science*, 8(1), 121-131.
- Aldag R. J., & Kuzuhara L. W. (2002). *Organizational behavior and management: An integrated skills approach*, Australia; Eagan: MN by South-Western/Thomson.
- Barkhuizen, N., Swanepoel, S., & Ermakova, J. (2012). Do personality factors predict job satisfaction? *Journal of Alternation Special Edition*, 5, 77-95.
- Behfar, K. J., Peterson, R. S., Mannis, E. A., & Trochim, W. M. K. (2008). The critical role of conflict resolution in teams: A close look at the links between conflict type, conflict management strategies, and team outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 170-188.
- Bong, M., & Clark, R. E. (1999). Comparison between self-concept and self-efficacy in academic motivation research. *Educational Psychologist*, 34(3), 139-153.
- Burton, J., & Dukes, F. (1990). *Conflict readings in management and resolution*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Copley, R. D. (2008). *Conflict management styles: a predictor of likability and perceived effectiveness among subordinates*. Unpublished dissertation, Indiana University, Indianapolis.
- Cropanzano, R., Rupp, D. E., Mohler, C. J., & Schminke, M. (2001). Three roads to organizational justice. *Journal of Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 20, 1-113.
- Deh Bozorgi, GH. R., & Hadaegh, R. (2006). *Burnout hidden golf*. Shiraz, Iran: Navid Publisher.
- De Dreu, C. K., Van Dierendonck, D., & Dijkstra, M. T. (2004). Conflict at work and individual well-being. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 15, 6-26.
- Farhangi, A. A. (2008). *Human Communications*. Tehran: Rasa institute Publisher.
- Graham, S. (2009). The effects of different conflict management styles on job satisfaction in rural health settings. *Economics & Business Journal: Inquiries & Perspectives*, 2(1), 71-85.

- Gray, J. L., Starke, F. A. (1984). *Organizational behavior* (3th ed.). San Diego: Longman Higher Education.
- Huo, Y. J., Molina, L. E., Sawahata, R., & Deang, J. M. (2005). Leadership and the management of conflicts in diverse groups: Why acknowledging versus neglecting subgroup identity matters. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 35 (2), 237-254.
- Huselid, M. A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover , productivity , and corporate financial performance. *Journal of Academy of Management*, 38(3), 635–872.
- Jost, P. J., & Weitzel, U. T. Z. (2007). *Strategic Conflict Management*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kassin, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H. (2008). *Social Psychology* (7<sup>th</sup> ed). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Kinnander, M. (2011). *Conflict management: How to manage functional conflicts within projects teams*. Unpublished dissertation, Norrumbria University, Sweden.
- Leung, M. Y., Anita, M. M., Liu, S., & Thomas, N.G. (2005). Is there a relationship between construction conflicts and participants' satisfaction? *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 12(2), 149-167.
- Markus, H. (1977). Self-schemata and processing information about the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(2), 63-78.
- Ng, H., Pena-Mora, F., & Tamaki, T. (2007). Dynamic Conflict Management in Large- Scale Design and Construction Projects. *Journal of Management in Engineering*, 52-66.
- Rahim, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13 (3), 206-235.
- Slabbert, A. D. (2004). Conflict management styles in traditional organisations. *The Social Science Journal*, 41(1), 83–92. doi:10.1016/j.soscij.2003.10.007
- Sohail, T. M., & Delin, H. (2013). Job satisfaction surrounded by academic staff: A case study of job satisfaction of academic staff of the GCUL, Pakistan. *Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(11), 126–137.
- Stein, K. F. (1996). The self-schema model: a theoretical approach to the self-concept in eating disorders. *Arch Psychiatr Nurs*, 10(2), 96-109.
- Tan, J. B. Y. & Yates, S. M. (2007). A Rasch analysis of the academic self-concept questionnaire. *International Education Journal*, 8(2), 470-484.
- Thomas, K. W. (1976). *Conflict and conflict management*. Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology. Chicago: Rand-McNally.
- Tonder, C. V., Havenga, W., & Visagie, J. (2008). The Causes of Conflict in Public and Private Sector Organizations in South Africa. *Managing Global Transitions*, 6(4), 373-401.
- Tong, Y., & Chen, G. M. (2008). Intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in cross-cultural organizational situations. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Studies*, 17(2), 149-161.
- Valentino, K., Cicchetti, D., Rogosch, F. A., Toth, S. L. (2008). True and false recall and dissociation among maltreated children: The role of self-schema. *Development and Psychopathology*, 20(1), 213-32. Retrieved March 3, 2009, from Research Library database. (Document ID: 1601417001).
- Weiten, W., Dunn, D. S., & Hammer, E. Y. (2014). *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustments in the 21st Century*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Wilderdom, (2003). The Role of Schemas in Personality. Retrieved March 4, 2009, from Wilderdom a project in natural living & transformation Web site:<http://wilderdom.com/personality/L111RoleOfSchemasInPersonality.htm> l
- Yahaya, A. (2009). The Relationship of Self-Concept and Communication Skills towards Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Johor Bahru. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 1(2), 25-34.
- Zartman, L. W. (2000). Conflict management: The long and the short of it. *SAIS Review*, 20, 227-235.